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CHINA RELEASES ROBERT FECTEAU, SHORTENS DOWNEY'S SENTENCE

2130659 PEKING NINA INTERNATIONAL SERVICE IN ENGLISH 0648 GMT
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(TEXT) PEKING, DECEMBER 13 (HSINHUA)--CHINA'S ORGANS OF DICTATORSHIP RECENTLY GRANTED LENIENCY TO TWO IMPRISONED SPIES OF THE U.S. CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, JOHN THOMAS DOWNEY AND RICHARD GEORGE FECTEAU, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROLETARIAN POLICY OF LENIENCY TOWARDS THOSE WHO CONFESS THEIR CRIMES AND SEVERE PUNISHMENT OF THOSE WHO REFUSE TO DO SO. THE LIFE SENTENCE ORIGINALLY PASSED ON J.T. DOWNEY WAS COMMUTED INTO 5 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT. R.G. FECTEAU WAS RELEASED BEFORE THE EXPIRY OF HIS TERM.

JOHN THOMAS DOWNEY, ALIAS JACK DONOVAN, MALE, 41, BORN IN CONNECTICUT, U.S.A., AND RICHARD GEORGE FECTEAU, MALE, 44, BORN IN MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.A., BOTH SERVED AS SPIES OF THE U.S. CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY. AFTER RECEIVING SPECIAL ESPIONAGE TRAINING IN THE UNITED STATES UNDER THE CIA, THE TWO CULPRITS WERE TRANSFERRED TO THE CIA'S AISUGI (JAPAN) ESPIONAGE ORGANIZATION TO ENGAGE IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES ENDANGERING THE SECURITY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA. IN 1952, DOWNEY PICKED 11 SPECIAL AGENTS AND, AFTER GIVING THEM SPECIAL TRAINING, HAD THEM AIR-DROPPED IN THREE GROUPS INTO NORTHEAST CHINA TO ENGAGE IN ESPIONAGE AND SABOTAGE. ON NOVEMBER 29, 1952, DOWNEY AND FECTEAU SECRETLY INTRUDED INTO CHINA'S TERRITORIAL AIR OVER NORTHEAST CHINA ON A SPY PLANE IN AN ATTEMPT TO MAKE CONTACT WITH AND PROVIDE SUPPLIES TO THE AIR-DROPPED SPECIAL AGENTS. THE PLANE WAS SHOT DOWN AND THE TWO CULPRITS, DOWNEY AND FECTEAU, WERE ARRESTED ON THE SPOT. IN NOVEMBER 1954, THE MILITARY TRIBUNAL OF THE SUPREME PEOPLE'S COURT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA SENTENCED JOHN THOMAS DOWNEY TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT AND RICHARD GEORGE FECTEAU TO 20 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT.

IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE TWO CULPRITS, DOWNEY AND FECTEAU, ADMITTED THEIR CRIMES DURING THE TRIAL AND THEIR BEHAVIOR WAS NOT BAD WHILE SERVING THEIR TERMS, CHINA'S ORGANS OF CITATORSHIP DECIDED TO GRANT THEM LENIENCY BY COMMUTING THE SENTENCE OF JOHN THOMAS DOWNEY INTO 5 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT (STARTING FROM THE DATE OF THE COMMUTATION) AND RELEASING RICHARD GEORGE FECTEAU BEFORE THE EXPIRY OF HIS TERM. FECTEAU WAS SET FREE AND LEFT CHINA VIA SHUNCHUN TODAY.

IT WAS ALSO LEARNED THAT MARY ANN BARRETT, AN AMERICAN WOMAN, ILLEGALLY INTRUDED INTO CHINA'S TERRITORIAL WATERS NEAR TAIKON ISLAND OFF THE PEARL RIVER ESTUARY IN KWANGTUNG PROVINCE ABOARD A YACHT ON APRIL 21, 1968, AND WAS PROMPTLY DETAINED BY CHINA'S PEOPLE'S POLICE. INVESTIGATIONS BY THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES CONCERNED VERIFIED THE ABOVE-MENTIONED FACT. THE CULPRIT, M. A. BARRETT, ADMITTED HER MISTAKES IN INTRUDED INTO CHINA'S TERRITORIAL WATERS. SHE WAS SET FREE AND LEFT CHINA TODAY.

ANOTHER AMERICAN, GERALD ROSS McLAUGHLIN, MALE, WHO ILLEGALLY INTRUDED INTO CHINA'S TERRITORIAL WATERS ON THE SAME YACHT WITH M. A. BARRETT, WAS ALSO DETAINED. DURING DETENTION, THE CULPRIT BEHAVED BADLY, RESISTED INVESTIGATION AND, TAKING THE WARDENS UNAWARES, COMMITTED SUICIDE ON MARCH 7, 1969. McLAUGHLIN'S YACHT WAS CONFISCATED ACCORDING TO LAW.

13 DEC 0745 JAS/CAT

PMS12
SECOND LEAD PRISONERS (NO PICKUP PMS3)

HONG KONG, DEC. 15, REUTER -- CHINA RELEASED TWO AMERICAN PRISONERS -- ONE A WOMAN -- AND COMMUTED THE LIFE SENTENCE OF ANOTHER TODAY ONLY A FEW MONTHS BEFORE PRESIDENT NIXON VISITS PEKING.

BUT PEKING ALSO REPORTED THE SUICIDE OF A FOURTH AMERICAN DETAINED AFTER ALLEGEDLY SAILING HIS YACHT INTO CHINESE WATERS IN 1968.

RICHARD FECTEAU, 43, WALKED TO FREEDOM ACROSS THE CHINESE BORDER INTO HONG KONG AFTER 19 YEARS IN A CHINESE JAIL. THE AMERICAN WOMAN, MARY ANN HARBERT, DETAINED THREE YEARS AGO, WAS WITH HIM.

THE OFFICIAL NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY SAID FECTEAU AND ANOTHER AMERICAN, JOHN DOWNEY, 41, OF NEW BRITAIN, CONN., WERE CAPTURED WHEN THEIR PLANE WAS SHOT DOWN OVER NORTHEAST CHINA IN 1952 WHILE TRYING TO SUPPLY U.S. AGENTS THERE.

BOTH WERE ALLEGED TO BE AGENTS OF THE U.S. CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA) AND WERE TRIED FOR ESPIONAGE IN 1954. FECTEAU WAS SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS AND DOWNEY TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT. DOWNEY, WHOSE MOTHER VISITED HIM IN PRISON RECENTLY, HAD HIS SENTENCE REDUCED TO FIVE YEARS WHICH STARTS FROM THE DATE OF COMMUTATION.

THE AGENCY SAID MISS HARBERT ILLEGALLY INTRUDED INTO CHINESE WATERS IN KWANGTUNG PROVINCE ON APRIL 21, 1968 ABOARD A YACHT OWNED BY GERALD ROSS MCLAUGHLIN.

MISS HARBERT ADMITTED HER MISTAKES BUT MCLAUGHLIN "BEHAVED BADLY, RESISTED INVESTIGATION AND, TAKING WARDERS UNAWARES, COMMITTED SUICIDE" IN 1969, THE AGENCY SAID.

FECTEAU AND MISS HARBERT WERE THE FIRST AMERICANS RELEASED BY CHINA SINCE ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP JAMES WALSH WAS ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY LAST YEAR AFTER SPENDING 12 YEARS IN PRISON.

ANOTHER AMERICAN WAS REPORTED BY THE CHINESE TO HAVE COMMITTED SUICIDE IN A CHINESE PRISON LAST YEAR. HE WAS HUGH FRANCIS REDMOND, AN EMPLOYEE OF AN AMERICAN FIRM ARRESTED IN 1954 ON SPY CHARGES. HE WAS SAID TO HAVE SLASHED HIS WRISTS WITH A RAZOR.

THE NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY SAID FECTEAU AND DOWNEY RECEIVED SPECIAL ESPIONAGE TRAINING IN THE UNITED STATES UNDER THE C.I.A. AND WERE SENT TO JAPAN.

IN 1952, DOWNEY WAS SAID TO HAVE PICKED 11 SPECIAL AGENTS AND, AFTER TRAINING THEM, HAD THEM AIR-DROPPED IN THREE GROUPS INTO NORTHEAST CHINA TO ENGAGE IN ESPIONAGE AND SABOTAGE.

ON NOV. 29, 1952, DOWNEY AND FECTEAU FLEW INTO NORTHEAST CHINA IN AN ATTEMPT TO MAKE CONTACT WITH AND PROVIDE SUPPLIES FOR THE SPECIAL AGENTS THE AGENCY SAID.

THE PLANE WAS SHOT DOWN AND THE TWO WERE CAPTURED. THEY WERE CONVICTED BY A CHINESE MILITARY TRIBUNAL IN 1954.

THE AGENCY SAID THAT IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THEY ADMITTED THEIR CRIMES AT THEIR TRIAL AND BECAUSE THEIR BEHAVIOR "WAS NOT BAD" IN PRISON, CHINA DECIDED TO GRANT THEM LENIENCY.

THE RELEASE OF MISS HARBERT AND THE REPORTED SUICIDE OF MCLAUGHLIN -- WHO WAS DETAINED WITH MISS HARBERT -- CAME AS A SURPRISE BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT AMONG THE AMERICANS GENERALLY KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN DETAINED IN CHINA.

REUTER WRM/Q
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TUMPMS13

SECOND LEAD PRISONERS 2 HONG KONG (PMS12)

FECTEAU AND MISS HARBERT WERE WHISKED OFF FROM THE BORDER CHECK POINT BY HELICOPTER TO HONG KONG'S INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT WHERE THEY BOARDED A U.S. MILITARY AIRCRAFT FOR THE UNITED STATES.

THEY CROSSED THE RAILWAY BRIDGE AT LOWU WITHIN FIVE MINUTES OF EACH OTHER.

FECTEAU CROSSED FIRST, WEARING A BLUE CHINESE-STYLE SUIT AND A BLUE CAP.

MISS HARBERT FOLLOWED, WEARING WESTERN-STYLE CLOTHES.

HONG KONG OFFICIALS SAID THEY BOTH LOOKED HEALTHY BUT MISS HARBERT WAS SORRY. APPROVED FOR RELEASE 2005/06/06 : CIA-RDP74B00415R000400100018-4
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